

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 AID-05

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9870

INFO DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

USIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: REACTION TO NEW GOH

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1624

1. PRESS COMMENT ON LOPEZ AND THE UB SCANDAL HAS DIMINISHED AS THE ATTENTION OF HONDURAS TURNS TO ITS NEW GOVERNMENT. BOTH LA PRENSA AND TIEMPO OF APRIL 24 CARRY FRONT PAGE PHOTOS AND STORIES ABOUT THE NEW COUNCIL OF MINISTERS (CABINET). LA PRENSA'S LEAD EDITORIAL COMMENTED THAT CHIEF OF STATE COLONEL MELGAR ENJOYS THE CONFIDENCE OF THE YOUNG OFFICERS AND THAT HE IS NEITHER A LEFTIST NOR A RIGHTIST, BUT RATHER IS A MAN OF DEMOCRATIC IDEAS. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE NEW COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, ACCORDING TO LA PRENSA, SHOWED THAT ALL THE "POPULIST" MINISTERS HAD BEEN REMOVED

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WITHOUT EXCEPTION. "THE MILITARY NO LONGER SHOULD

CONTINUE BEING THE INSTRUMENT BY WHICH THE OPPORTUNISTS AND DEMAGOGUES CONTINUE TO BRING ANARCHY TO THE COUNTRY AS THEY HAVE SINCE DECEMBER 4, 1972." IN A RELATED EDITORIAL, LA PRENSA EXPRESSED PLEASURE THAT THE NEW MINISTERS ARE CAPABLE PEOPLE WHO, THOUGH POLITICALLY AWARE, ARE MODERATE RATHER THAN POPULIST IN THEIR OUTLOOK.

2. TIEMPO OF APRIL 24 ALSO DEVOTED ITS LEAD EDITORIAL TO THE NEW COUNCIL OF MINISTERS. TIEMPO COMMENTED ON THE NEED FOR "IDEOLOGICAL HOMOGENEITY" IN THE CABINET AND SAID THAT IT HAS APPARENTLY BEEN ACHIEVED, ALTHOUGH IT IS NOW UNCERTAIN WHETHER IT IS REALLY A TRUE IDEOLOGY OR MERELY A COMMON ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE AND THE WORLD. TIEMPO SAYS THAT HONDURAS IS IN A TIME OF GREAT CRISIS AND THAT CIRSES CREATE GREAT MEN. WHETHER THIS WILL HAPPEN IN HONDURAS, SAYS TIEMPO, REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

3. THE ONLY SIGNIFICANT RECENT STATEMENT ON THE LOPEZ SCANDAL WAS PUBLISHED BY EL DIA ON APRIL 24 AND CONSISTED OF A STATEMENT BY THE HONDURAN WORKER'S PARTY (FORMED IN APRIL 1973 AS A BREAKOFF OF THE CHINESE ORIENTED WING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY). THE STATEMENT OCCUPIED AN ENTIRE PAGE AND ALTHOUGH THERE WAS NO SPECIFIC INDICATION, IT GAVE THE IMPRESSION OF BEING A PAID ADVERTISEMENT. THE DECLARATION OF THE PARTY MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ABOUT THE U.S.:

- A. U.S. HELP FOLLOWING HURRICAN FIFI WAS JUST ANOTHER FOR OF SUBMISSION TO AMERICAN CAPITAL;
- B. U.S. MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES SUPPORT FENAGH (CATTLE-MEN'S ASSOCIATION) AND COHEP (HONDURAN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE COUNCIL) IN THEIR ULTRARIGHTIST TENDENCIES;
- C. THE U.S. AMBASSADOR DISGUISED HIS INTERVENTION IN THE PROMULGATION OF THE RECENT AGRARIAN REFORM LAW BY SAYING, "THE LAW IS HONDURAN."; AND
- D. WHEN THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT INTRODUCED REFORMS THREATENING THE STATUS QUO, THE BANANA COMPANIES AND THE USG RETALIATED BY INVOLVING THE GOH IN A SCANDAL; WHICH WAS A POLITICAL STRATEGY AIMED AT OVERTHROWING THE GOVERNMENT.

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4. THE HONDURAN WORKERS' PARTY PROPOSES:
- A. GUILTY OR NOT, ALL PUBLIC OFFICIALS SHOULD BE REMOVED BECAUSE THEY HAVE LOST THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PEOPLE;
 - B. THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL SHOULD EXPROPRIATE THESE OFFICIAL'S DIRTY MONEY;
 - C. THE BANANA CONCESSIONS SHOULD BE REVIEWED; AND
 - D. THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW SHOULD BE REVIEWED IN ORDER TO ABOLISH THE LARGE BANANA HOLDINGS.

5. REPORTEDLY COSTA RICA, NICARAGUA, MEXICO, GUATEMALA
AND PANAMA HAVE RECOGNIZED OR CONTINUED RELATIONS WITH THE
NEW GOVERNMENT.

6. COMMENT: IF PRESS TREATMENT OF RECENT EVENTS IS A
VALID INDICATOR, HONDURAN INTEREST IS INCREASINGLY
DIRECTED TOWARD THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND ITS FUTURE
PROGRAMS AND PERFORMANCE. THERE APPEARS TO BE A GENERAL
PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE OF LOPEZ' GUILT IN THE BRIBERY EPISODE.
THE LIMITED COVERAGE OF THE INVESTIGATING COMMISSION'S U.S. TRIP IS
HIDDEN IN INNER PAGES. ALTHOUGH THERE IS STILL SOME
TREATMENT OF PROBABLE PUNISHMENT OF THOSE GUILTY IN THE
EPISODE, THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE STRONG FEELING AGAINST
LOPEZ NOW THAT HE HAS LEFT OFFICE.
SANCHEZ

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